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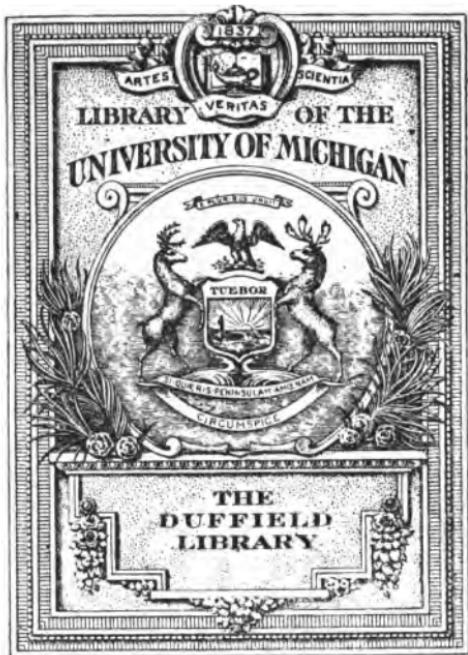
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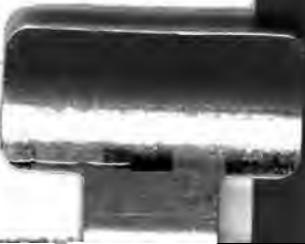
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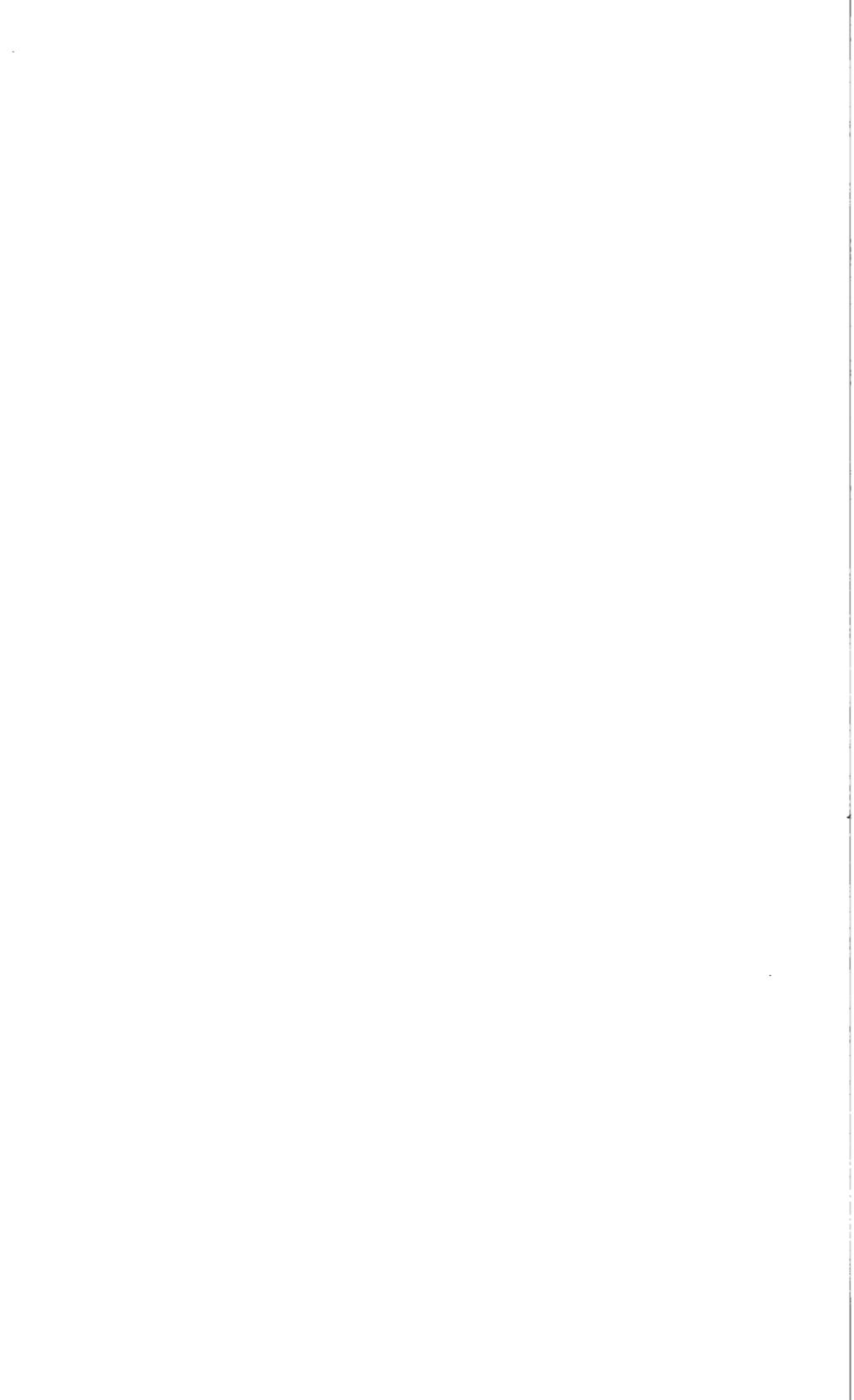
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THE GIFT OF
THE TAPPAN PRESBY-
TERIAN ASSOCIATION







REMARKS
ON THE
PERSEVERANCE
OF
THE SAINTS;
BEING THE SUBSTANCE OF
TWO DISCOURSES,
PREACHED IN THE SECOND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,
WILMINGTON, APRIL 18, 1823.

g. W. Gilbert

By E. W. GILBERT.

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PREFACE.

The following imperfect Treatise is printed solely for the use of the people of the Author's charge. To them the publication will explain itself. As it is not intended for general circulation, but few copies will be published.

But lest this Tract should fall into the hands of strangers unacquainted with the circumstances of its publication, it may be well to mention the cause of its appearance.

During the second week in April, a very general interest was excited in regard to the "Perseverance of the Saints," by a public discussion of the question between two Ministering Brethren of different opinions and denominations. The subject having attracted the notice, and called forth the opinions of the other Ministers in Wilmington, and there appearing to be a general disposition to examine the matter, I was requested by some of my friends to say something upon the subject on the ensuing sabbath.

Believing that a calm and charitable discussion of the topic would not be injurious to any one, while it might serve to confirm and establish my people in what I deemed an important doctrine of the Bible, I consented; and took the first opportunity of making the following unwritten though not undigested remarks upon the subject. Some of the most judicious and respectable members of the church afterwards held a meeting and agreed to request a copy for publication. A complete copy it was not in my power to give, but as individual application had also been made to me for the *Texts* on which my leading arguments were founded, as their appeared a greater probability of my people reading a short though imperfect treatise by their Pastor, than longer though much better treatises by a stranger,—and as I could not see any thing in such proceeding necessarily offensive to other denominations, I resolved to prepare a *Skeleton* of the arguments adduced and objections answered.

The reader, therefore, will not expect any thing like a regular Sermon, but be content with some *General Hints* of arguments and answers. I have presented the plain text, with only so much of a comment, as to give the inquirer a key to the reasoning founded on the text. The filling up and colouring are left to the reader himself.

If the hints here given should be instrumental in turning the attention of the people of my charge to a more diligent perusal of the word of God, and be at all influential in establishing them in the "faith once delivered to the Saints," I shall be amply compensated.

The AUTHOR.

NOTE. As it is inconsistent with my plan to state arguments in full, the reader will pardon my *emphasising* or *stalicising* those words upon which the argument hangs.

qjst
Tappan Presbyterians
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ON THE

PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS.

MY DEAR BRETHREN,

My views of religious controversy are briefly these.

1. A degree of it is sometimes proper and even necessary. Otherwise the Apostle's exhortation was absurd, "Contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints." Jude 3.

2. One occasion on which it is not only *lawful*, but *obligatory* to contend with others is, when the *fundamental doctrines* of the Gospel are denied. When an association of men style themselves a "Christian" Church, and yet deny the Trinity, the Divinity of Christ, the Atonement, the plenary Inspiration of the Scriptures, and reject the doctrine of everlasting punishment, it appears to me, no principle of Christian charity forbids an ambassador of Christ to notice and condemn their errors. And more especially when these errors are widely diffused as they are in many parts of our land, and *in none more so than in this region*, it seems hardly reconcilable with true love to souls to be silent on the subject.

3. Controversy between *Christian Brethren* whether individuals or churches, or on the non-essential points on which they differ (for they cannot differ on *essential* points) is generally injurious and to be condemned. For the breach of *charity* which it occasions is far worse than immaterial errors in doctrine.

Yet a temperate discussion of the doctrines of your faith, in the presence of your own people, without any view directly to *attack* the faith or *condemn* the *principles* of another church, does not, in my opinion merit the name of *controversy*.

The doctrine of the infallible Perseverance of the Saints, I do not regard as a *fundamental* doctrine of the Gospel; of course, I admit, people may hold different sentiments and yet be saved. Yet I cannot but think it a *very important* doctrine, and one which is clearly and strongly taught in the word of God,—one which is in a measure essential to a Christian's *comfort*, and greatly conducive to the *glory* of God.

In offering a few Remarks upon the subject at this time, therefore, I have no view to controversy, no design nor disposition to attack or condemn any of my Christian brethren. So far would I be from doubting the ~~sanctity~~ of those individuals or Churches who differ from us on this subject, that I believe there are in those churches some of the most consistent Christians upon earth, and think very probably as many real saints as in our own or any other church. But I wish to remind you of the Arguments upon which the doctrine of our church is built, and of the Answers which are usually offered to objections. I will

I. State and explain the DOCTRINE.

II. Notice some OBJECTIONS; and

III. Offer some ARGUMENTS.

I. It seems proper to explain what we mean by the doctrine of the Perseverance of the Saints.

1. By a "Saint" I do not mean a *perfectly holy person*, for there is not such an one on earth. Nor, running to the other extreme, do I consider every *awakened* and *convicted* person a saint; for many are alarmed, excited and partially reformed who are never thoroughly converted. The falling away of such persons we do not consider the falling away of *saints*. But by a *saint* I understand a *real Christian*, one that has been *born again*, John iii. 7.—who has become a *new creature*, 2 Cor. v. 17. or to use a favorite expression of our opponents, has been "soundly and thoroughly converted." It is impossible such a person should perish.

2. When we say it is *impossible* for a saint to fall away and be lost ; we do not mean that this *impossibility* arises from any thing in the *Christian himself*, but from the *immutability* of the *purpose* and *promise* of God. If left to himself, the Christian would fall in a moment ; and hence arises the propriety of those cautions, exhortations and warnings against falling which abound in the word of God.

3. When we say it is *impossible* to *fall from grace*, we do not mean that it is impossible to lose *many degrees of grace*, or to be backsliders to a considerable extent ; for this we admit is a frequent occurrence : but that it is impossible to fall *entirely away*, to lose *all grace* and *perish eternally*. Dr. *Emmons* and some other New England divines admit a *total*, tho' they deny a *final* falling from grace. Our church, in my opinion very properly, denies both ; but the latter is the more important of the two, and it is to this I shall principally direct your attention.

Our doctrine therefore is,

"That no real Christian, no one who has been truly regenerated and made a new creature in Christ Jesus, will ever be suffered to perish eternally."

II. OBJECTIONS.

To the above doctrine some of our Christian brethren object,

I. That it "*it destroys free agency*. God cannot decree the infallible perseverance of a saint without infringing his liberty as a moral agent." And they say a great deal about *necessity* being inconsistent with *liberty* &c.

To which we answer,

1. We grant that *physical necessity*, or *force* is inconsistent with *liberty* ; but *moral necessity* or *certainty*, which is all we plead for, does not interfere with *liberty* in the least.

2. We do not suppose any *other* or *greater* influence necessary to *keep us* in a state of grace than to *bring us into* that state at first. In a word if *conversion* by Divine power does not destroy free agency, *preservation* by the *same* power will not. Nothing but divine grace *upholds* a Christian for a moment ; and if this upholding for a moment does not destroy free agency, why should upholding for an *hour*, or a *day*, or a *year*, or our life time, destroy free agency ?

3. If God cannot decree the infallible perseverance of a saint without destroying his free agency, then our Lord *Jesus Christ* was not a free agent ; for his infallible perseverance was *certain* and *fixed*. v. Isa. xli. 1—4. The same may be said of *angels* whose perseverance depends entirely upon God, and yet they are free agents. And the same is true also of *glorified saints* of whom Christ says "*because I live, ye shall live also.*" Their perseverance therefore throughout eternity is as certain as the perseverance of Christ himself. And yet are they not free ? we wish no higher freedom.

Obj. II. "*It tends to Licentiousness.*"

Answer. We cannot always judge accurately of the tendency of a doctrine, especially if it be one which we do not rightly *understand*,—which is generally true of doctrines which we *do not hold*. The safest rule is to judge of the tendency by the *actual effects*. We think the doctrines of our Methodist brethren, for instance, to be of dangerous tendency ; they think otherwise ; and the *actual effects* prove that we do not understand the true nature or tendency of their peculiar tenets. Let them make the same allowance for us. We are quite sure they do not understand the tendency of our faith ; for we *know* it tends to purify our hearts.

The *certainty* of their salvation did not tempt the primitive believers to licentiousness, why should it have a different effect on us ? They could say (1 John iii. 2, 3.) "*We know* that when he shall appear we *shall* be like him, for we shall see him as he is. *And every man that hath this hope purifieth himself even as he is pure.*" Why should the certainty of our perseverance have a different effect ? Especially as we can have no *hope*, much less *certainty* of salvation, unless conscious of *present* holiness.

Besides, this objection has been brought in every age against the *whole Gospel system*. Rom. iii. 7, & 31. vi. ix. 19, &c.

Obj. III. "The certainty of their salvation is inconsistent with the *Efforts* and *Labours* of saints to save themselves."

The whole force of this objection lies here, that unless there be some *uncertainty* of success, a person *will not labour* for success; and if there was a *perfect certainty* of salvation a Christian would not trouble himself to use the means.

Ans. 1. *Christ* had a *perfect certainty* of success and salvation, and yet he used the means, and laboured with strong "crying and tears."

2. *Paul* had a *perfect certainty* of escape from shipwreck, and yet he used the means. *Acts xxvii.* In a *desperate* case, like that of a condemned and helpless sinner, *uncertainty* of escape, so far from being a stimulus, deadens every effort! Let there be a glimmering *hope* and he will do something; let there be a *certainty* of a blessing *on his efforts* and he will strive with all his might. And mind, Christians can have no certainty of salvation except *through their own efforts*. How can they expect to *run the race without running*, or *fight the battle without fighting*!

Obj. IV. "The *Exhortations*, *Cautions*, and *Warnings* of the New Testament prove the *possibility* and the *danger* of saints falling away."

Ans. 1. There is a possibility and a danger of saints "falling away"—i. e. to a *considerable extent*. They are in continual "danger" of complying with temptation, of conforming to the world, of sitting down in indolence, and of falling into sin. Hence the propriety of all these *moral stimulants* to activity and watchfulness. If a soldier, from the known character of his Captain, were sure of winning the battle, and of the life of every soldier being preserved, he would nevertheless fight, knowing that he would otherwise be knocked down, trodden under foot, wounded and disgraced, even though he escaped with life. Just so, though Christ has promised that every soldier shall escape with life, he has not promised he shall escape with *honour* and receive the crown of victory unless he fight valiantly. He may and often does leave the indolent and the cowardly to be wounded, disgraced, and maimed for life.

As the *present comfort* of a Christian therefore, depends on his activity and holiness; and as his *future reward* will be *measured* by his attainments here, there is the utmost propriety and kindness in administering these cautions and holding out these encouragements.

2. Viewed in *himself* as I have hinted before, there is a possibility and danger, yea a *certainty* of his falling *entirely away*, unless he strives and labours. But there is neither certainty, possibility, nor danger of God's breaking an *absolute promise* to save all who come to Christ.

Obj. V. "Facts of acknowledged saints falling into sin;—such as *David*, *Solomon*, and *Peter*." As great reliance is placed on this argument, I will notice it more particularly.

1. *DAVID.* That he *died* a Christian and is *now* in heaven, I believe nobody questions. Of course he did not *finally* fall from grace, and his example therefore is nothing to the point. They must bring an instance of a saint who *actually perished*.

2. That he fell into *sin*, and into a great and complicated sin, is lamentably true. That his conscience was stunned by his fall, and his spiritual comfort entirely destroyed, I have no question. But that he fell *entirely* from grace, when I have so many clear declarations of God to the contrary in regard to *every* saint, I will not admit,—except on one condition,—that those who assert it will produce *some express declaration* of God to that effect.

That the Lord was *displeased* with David, as he is with every Christian when he sins, is not denied; but that he *wholly cast him off* is no where said, and never can be proved. That the Holy Spirit took away the "joys of his salvation" is admitted, but that the Spirit *entirely* left him cannot be proved, and the contrary is implied in *Ps. 51. 11.* A flame may be damped without being quenched, a seed may be buried deep without being killed, a man may be very sick and nigh unto death, and yet not dead, a saint may fall very far, and yet not be lost; God may *chastise* but will "not utterly" destroy; may "hide his face for a moment, but with *everlasting kindness* will he have mercy" on his people. *Ps. 89. 30.*
—34. *Isa. 54. 8.*

It remains therefore for them to prove that David became spiritually dead and was "born again" a second time.

SOLOMON is another instance of a saint supposed to have fallen from grace. My reasons for believing Solomon neither totally nor finally fell from Divine favour are

1. The *circumstances of his birth and infancy*. "Before he had done either good or evil, in his infancy it is said "*the Lord loved him* ;" 2 Sam. xii. 24, the same expression which is used of Jacob, Rom. ix. 13, and denotes his choice to salvation.

2. The *Name* which the Lord then gave him, "*Jedediah*" or beloved of the Lord. I do not think an instance can be brought of a person thus honored with a Divine name who was afterwards rejected.

3. The *Promise* concerning him, 2 Sam. vii. 14, 15. Where the Lord promises to be a father to him, to *chasten* but not *disinherit* him ; and expressly distinguishes the favour intended for him from the mere temporary favour granted to *Saul*.

4. The *Reserve* expressed 1 Kings xi. 4, 6. "And his heart was *not perfect* with the Lord his God, as was the heart of David his father. And Solomon did evil in the sight of the Lord, and went *not fully* after the Lord, as did David his father." "This is spoken of him at the time of his greatest wickedness, even "when his wives turned away his heart after other gods,"—verse 4.

5. *Commendation* after his death, 2 Chron. xi. 17.

6. He wrote the book of *Ecclesiastes* (i. 1.) when he was an *old man*, and confesses the very sins of which the objectors suppose he did not repent. And the Apostle says of the Scripture writers generally, "*Holy men of God, spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.*" 2 Pet. i. 21.

Thus it appears from the *history* itself, as I think, that Solomon did not perish. But if all this were blotted out, I would not believe he was lost, until

7. The **ABSOLUTE PROMISES** of God in regard to *every saint* are blotted out also.

PEPPER did not *finally* fall, as all admit. That he did not *totally* fall is evident to my mind from Luke xxii. 32. Where our Lord says, "Simon, Satan hath desired to sift you as wheat ; but I have prayed for thee that *thy faith may not fail.*" From which it is evident that his faith did not *entirely* fail.

OBJ. VI. "Some acknowledged Apostates were once Christians, as *Saul, Judas, Hymenaeus and Philetus*."

As to *Saul*, it is said the Lord "turned him into *another man* and gave him *another heart*" 1 Sam. x. 6, 9. (i. e. made him a *wiser* and *greater* man to qualify him for the kingdom,) but it is no where said God gave him a *new* heart and made him a *holy* man, and there is no evidence that he ever had grace. "But he had the Spirit of the Lord and prophesied." True, and so had some mentioned in the New Testament, Matt. vii. 23, who "*prophesied* and cast out *devils* and did many *wonderful works*" and yet Christ says "*I never knew you.*" That is they *never* were saints.

Of *Judas*, it said that he was once a good man because the Lord says "*Have not I chosen you twelve*" John vi. 70: We grant he was *chosen* to the *Apostleship* but not to *salvation* ! Thus the Lord says "*I speak not of you all, I know whom I have chosen.* Ye are clean but not all." John xiii. 10, 18.

Obj. "But would Christ call 'a devil' to the Apostleship, and send him forth to preach the gospel ? what should we think of a church now that would send forth a wicked man to preach the Gospel?"—Ans. Which is the worse to *call* a devil unto the Apostleship, or to *continue* him in the Apostleship *after* his character is discovered ? And did not our Lord do this ? David foretold many centuries before that one of the disciples would be a wicked man, and Christ knew this well and who it was that should betray him, when he called him to the Apostleship.

Obj. "But he cast out devils, and if he were a devil at this time, then Satan casted out Satan, which our Lord says is absurd." Ans. This is a mere *quibble*.

Suppose Judas did cast out devils, it was not *Satan* but *our Lord* who gave him the power and disposition to cast them out.

Obj. But it is said "Judas, by transgression, *fell*." True, and the same passage states what he fell from, to wit, "the *ministry and apostleship*" Acts i. 25.

Obj. "Jesus says Them which thou hast given me I have kept and none of them is lost; but the son of perdition, that the Scriptures might be fulfilled." John xvii. 12. This is a Hebraism and does no more denote that Judas was one of those who were given to Christ, than the expressions Luke iv. 24. 25. denote that the widow of *Sarepta* was "one of the widows of *Israel*;" or Naaman the *Syrian*, was "one of the lepers of *Israel*," see also Rev. xxi. 27.

Hymeneus and Alexander are also said to have fallen from grace, because they "put away a good conscience and made shipwreck of faith." 1 Tim. i. 19.

Ans. 1. A man may have a "good conscience" and not be a Christian, for Paul "lived in all good conscience" before his conversion. Acts xxiii. 1. And the "faith" of which shipwreck was made is the *doctrine* of the Gospel. As it is said in 2 Tim. ii. 18. "Hymeneus and Philetus concerning the *truth* have erred, saying that the *Resurrection* is past already, and thus overthrow the *faith* of some."

2. These Apostles are expressly *distinguished from true saints* in the next verse. After mentioning their fall, the Apostle says "nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, *the Lord knoweth them that are his*." —plainly implying that Hymeneus and Philetus never were really "*his*."

Obj. VII. "The warning given concerning the Righteous in Ezek. xviii. and xxxiii. proves that the righteous may fall away." &c.

Ans. 1. Look at the *object* of the sacred writer, which is to teach that *God will deal with men according to their ways*." In the xviii. chap. the object is to do away the parable of the "sour grapes," or the punishment of children for the sins of their parents. The Lord declares that the *righteousness* of a *parent* shall not save a *wicked son*; neither shall the wickedness of a *parent* prevent the salvation of a *righteous son*. And in the xxxiii. chap. the object is to show that no *past* righteousness shall save a man *if* he falls away; and no *past* sins shall ruin a man, *if* he repents. There is nothing in this contrary to our doctrine.

2. The "righteousness" here spoken of *may* be a mere *external, ceremonial righteousness*, such as Paul had before his conversion. Phil. iii. 6. And I do veryily believe that *apparent* righteousness rather than *real* sanctity is here spoken of: and also that the *rewards* and *punishments* here more immediately alluded to, are of a *temporal* kind. The contrary, at any rate, never can be proved. Now, we admit from such a righteousness a man *may* fall away.

3. If we grant that the *righteousness* here mentioned be *real sanctification*, it does not follow that a righteous man ever *did*, or ever *will actually* fall from grace. The text only makes a *supposition*. "When a righteous man turneth away from his righteousness—*If* he trust to his own righteousness &c." Now we grant *if* he does this and *when* he does this, he will be lost.

But it is an old maxim in logic, "*suppositio non ponit in esse*," i. e. supposition of a case does not prove its actual existence. Suppose "an angel from heaven should preach another gospel, he would be accursed," Gal. i. 8. Our Lord says "*If I should say I know Him not, I should be a liar*." John viii. 55. But these suppositions do not prove that an angel ever *will* preach another gospel; nor that our Lord ever *will* declare a falsehood.

Obj. VIII. "The breaking off the Jewish branches proves falling from grace." Rom. xi. 17.

Ans. 1. The *Olive Tree* from which these branches were broken off, and others grafted in is the *visible church*. From this the Jews were cast out, and the Gentiles introduced. If this is "falling from grace," we do not deny it.

2. That there was not a single *saint* lost by the rejection of the Jews, is evident from the first part of the chapter, "Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. *God hath not cast away his people whom he foreknew*. The election hath

obtained it, and the rest were blinded," verses 1, 3, 7. Hence it appears that every elect person or every Christian was saved.

3. At the conclusion of the account, the Apostle makes this remark, "The gifts and calling of God are *without repentance*." In which he alludes to his never casting off his *real people*.

Obj. IX. "Paul laboured lest he should be a cast away." 1 Cor. ix. 27.

Ans. So did our *Lord*; he was "straitened until his work was accomplished," but he had no fear of being finally cast away. The Apostle, in all his Epistles, (as I shall show hereafter) expresses his *full confidence* of the final salvation of every saint. And if he ever doubted of his own *salvation*, it was because he doubted his *conversion*. But I do not believe, after his rapture to the third heaven, and the clear testimonials of a Saviour's love, he ever doubted either. In this text he simply intends to show *how he lived and laboured*, as an example for them to imitate. He exhorts them to run as if for a prize which *only one of them* would obtain, (24) (though *all would* obtain the prize) And so he run, as a racer would, who knew that if he did not run well he would be disgraced. Our Saviour compares himself to a *thief*, to express the *unexpectedness* of his coming, though he resembled him in nothing else. So the Apostle compares himself to a *racer* to show the *intensity* of his labours, though unlike a racer he was *perfectly sure* of victory.

After all, it is not said, he *was* cast away, or that any saint *will be* cast away. So that all such texts prove nothing against perseverance. That we *should all run and strive* in the same manner, every Calvinist grants.

Obj. X. "It is said of the Galatians, *Ye are fallen from grace*." Gal. v. 4. This is an objection drawn from the mere *words* of Scripture, without noticing the scope and *intention*. By the same rule I could prove "There is no God" Ps. xiv. Or that the Apostle was a "robber of churches." 2 Cor. xi. 8. The *doctrine* of Scripture, and not the mere *words*, is the word of God. Now let any one glance at the preceding part of the Epistle, and he will readily perceive what "fall" was referred to,—even a fall from the *doctrines* of grace. They had "turned away to another gospel," and forsaking the doctrine of salvation by *faith*, they sought *Justification* by the *works* of the *Law*. Therefore he says "Christ has become of no effect unto you, *whosoever of you are justified by the Law*; ye are fallen from grace;" i. e. from the *doctrines* of grace.

If this is all the "falling from grace" which is contended for, we are very willing to admit its possibility and frequency. Observe again, that if it could be proved that the Galatians fell *totally* for a time there is no proof they fell *finally*, and therefore here is no proof that any real Saint will be *finally lost*. Of course understand it as you will, it argues nothing against our doctrine.

Obj. XI. "Salvation is every where offered on *condition* of perseverance, which shows that the *condition may fail to be complied with*." Ans. It shows no such thing; but only that *unless* the condition be complied with, the blessing will be lost. This we freely grant. But we contend that the *conditions* (if they must be so called) are *sure* to be complied with by every one of Christ's people. Thus when it is said, "If ye abide in me, ye shall ask what ye will."—If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed. We shall reap, if we faint not," &c. &c. It is all certainly true. But unless our opponents prove that some real Christian *actually fails* to "abide, continue," &c. these texts will not prove the loss of a single believer.

And I will show presently that these "conditions" are *sure* to be performed by *all* of Christ's people.

Obj. XII. "It is impossible for those who were once enlightened,—if they shall fall away," &c. Heb. vi. 4, 6.

The objection must prove two things;—first, that these were *real Christians*; and secondly, that they *really fell away*. But in my opinion, neither of these things can be proved. I see no reason to believe them *real saints*.

1. Because these expressions may apply to those who had only those *miracu-*

less external gifts so common in that day. There is nothing said of these persons more extraordinary than of the false professors mentioned Matt. vii. 22, 23, of whom Christ says. "I never knew you." The stony ground hearers "tasted of the good word of God,"—"they received the word with joy," and yet had "no root in themselves," that is were not truly converted.

2. They are manifestly compared to the barren ground in the 8th verse, which is a proof the soil of their hearts was never prepared by the Holy Spirit for a true reception of the seed.

3. The Apostle had no idea real *Christians* would thus fall away. "But believe we are persuaded better things of you, though we thus speak." (9.)

In fact the whole is a *solemn warning* to persons who have been *enlightened* and *convicted*, not to stifle their convictions lest they commit the unpardonable sin.

But could it be proved these were *real Christians*, it is not said they *will certainly fall*,—but "if they shall fall away &c." And this I have before shown proves nothing as to the *actual event*.

Obj. XIII. "A sinner may tread under foot the Son of God and count the blood of the Covenant wherewith he was sanctified an unholy thing &c." Heb. x. 29. From which it is argued that a man may fall from *sanctification* and from saving grace.

It is taken for granted in the objection that "He who was *sanctified*" is the *apostate*. Whereas

1. It is generally supposed by commentators that the "Son of God" is here referred to; and according to the grammatical construction of the sentence, "the Son of God" is certainly the last antecedent. And it is equally true of Christ that he was *sanctified* and *fitted* to be the Mediator "by the blood of the covenant." John xvii. 19. Heb. xiii. 20

2. But admitting it to be the *apostate*, it remains to be proved that the *sanctification* was any thing more than *external* and *ceremonial* sanctification. That both persons and things are called *holy* and said to be *sanctified* which are only externally *dedicated* to God, we have abundant evidence in this same Epistle. In the preceding chapter, 13, 22, and 23 verses we read of a *sanctification* which had nothing to do with the *heart*. "The blood of bulls and goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, *sanctifieth* to the purifying of the flesh &c" What *sanctification* of *heart* could ever be accomplished by the "blood of bulls and goats!" And yet if a person upon whom this blood had been *sprinkled* should despise the ordinance, he would be guilty of "trampling on the blood of the covenant," for this typified the blood of Christ. In like manner, if after having been *baptized*, and making profession of religion, we break our covenant vows and apostatize, we "despise the blood of the covenant wherewith we were sanctified," or *separated* and *dedicated* to the service of God.

The whole however is merely a *caution* against apostacy from our profession, and does not teach that any *will* thus despise the blood of the covenant—much less that any *will* fall from real *sanctification* of *heart*. "If we sin wilfully after having received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin." (26.) If this proves "falling from grace," it proves also that after such fall there is *no recovery*! for, for such persons "there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin, but a fearful looking for of judgment &c."

But these texts prove nothing as to the *actual event*, which is the thing to be proved.

Obj. XIV. "If any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him." Heb. x. 38.

Ans. 1. This is perfectly true in its *literal* sense, and not at all opposed to our doctrine. An opposite doctrine would be horrible.

2. There may be a difference between "drawing back" and "drawing back to *perdition*." A saint may draw back *in part*.—And if he draws back at all God will be *displeased* with him.

3. Here is the "if" again, by way of *caution*.

4. It is expressly said *immediately after*, that real *Christians* *do not* draw back

to perdition. "We are not of them who draw back unto perdition, but of them that believe to the saving of the soul."

OBJ. XV "A man may escape the pollutions of the present world and afterwards fall away &c." 2 Pet. ii. 20.

Now 1. All this may be said of those who are only *externally reformed* from the infidelity, vice and immorality of the world, and have a *speculative head knowledge* of the ways of righteousness. That such persons may and do fall away we do not doubt.

2. That these persons were not changed in *heart*, that their *nature* never was renewed, is evident from the *comparison* used by the Apostle on the subject. He compares them to "a *sow* that was *washed* returning to her wallowing in the mire." The *nature* of the animal was not changed; tho externally washed, her appetites remained the same; she was a *sow* still. Had her *nature* been changed to that of a *sheep*, she would *never have returned*!

Thus, my Brethren, I have noticed some of the strongest arguments I have ever heard or read against the "Perseverance of the Saints." There are others adduced, of the same general nature, but no more difficult to answer than those I have mentioned.

You will observe some of them are drawn from *Metaphysics*,—some from *supposed Facts*,—and the rest from what they think is *implied* in several passages of Scripture. If I understand the controversy, the only *express* declaration of the *fact* of falling from grace, which they adduce, is Gal. v. 4. And that text, as I have shown, evidently speaks of a falling not from *sanctification* but from *orthodoxy*.

There is not in all the Bible, that I have ever seen, a solitary declaration that *any real saint ever actually perished*.

That there are *cautions* and *warnings* of the most solemn kind against drawing back at all, we cheerfully admit.

Now if I can bring *express declarations* of Scripture, and *absolute promises* of God that *every saint shall persevere*, all the cautions and warnings and apparent apostacies before mentioned, must be understood as *not inconsistent* with our doctrine.

III. ARGUMENTS for Perseverance.

My first arguments shall be founded on the *General Principles* of the Gospel; afterwards I will adduce *express* passages of Scripture.

I. The doctrine of *Election* proves perseverance. I shall not here enter fully into this mos' unpopular subject, but shall content myself with observing, *Saints* are elected unto *salvation*, of course to *perseverance*. 2 Thess. ii. 13. "We are bound to give thanks to God always for you Brethren, beloved of the Lord because *God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.*" "God hath *chosen*"—here is *Election*—"chosen from the beginning"—here is the *eternity* of that election,—"chosen to *salvation*."—here is the *end* of that election—"through *sanctification and belief of the truth*,"—here is *perseverance* in grace. See also Eph i. 4—12. 1 Pet. i 1—4.

Saints therefore are *chosen* or *elected* to salvation. The only question is whether this election *secures* salvation? Now that it does is evident from two considerations.

1. The elect can *never be deceived or led fatally astray*. Matt. xx iv. 24. "Inasmuch that if it were possible, they should deceive the very elect." Does not this teach that it is *impossible* to "deceive" them, so as to ruin them? This *impossibility* arises however not from the *wisdom* of Christians, but from the *immutable purpose* of God to bring them to salvation.

2. Because at the Day of Judgment *nothing shall be laid to their charge*. Rom. viii. 33. "Who shall lay *any thing* to the charge of God's elect?" The Apostle challenges any one to name an *accuser*, or a *charge* which should appear against them. Now the Apostles, in the texts I have quoted, address all *saints as elected*, of course teach that all *saints* will *persevere*.

Obj. "Judas is said to be *chosen* or *elected*, and yet was lost. John vi. 70.
 Ans. He was chosen to the Apostleship, but not to *salvation*, as our Lord teaches, John xiii. 18.

II. The doctrine of *Particular Redemption* proves it. Whatever *general* bearing the atonement of Christ may have towards the rest of the world, the *chief object* manifestly was to *purchase the salvation of his people*.

The doctrine of the Bible is that he died as a *Substitute* for others, to *prevent* the death of those for whom he died. He took their law-place, endured the *penalty* and obeyed the *precept* of the law for them. Thus Isa. 53. 5. "He was wounded for *our* transgressions; he was bruised for *our* iniquities; and by his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep had gone astray, and the Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all" i. e. of all Israel.

Now it appears to me that if he was wounded for our transgressions, the Lord will not wound *us* also again for the *same* transgressions. If the Lord laid on him the iniquity of his people, he will not lay that iniquity, (or punishment of iniquity) on any body else. This would be to require a *double offering* or atonement, and Christ has by his *one offering* forever perfected them that are sanctified. Heb. x. 14.

Again, John x. 15. "I lay down my life for my sheep." i. e. to *save the lives* of my sheep. Now if Christ's sheep *any of them* perish, his death will have been in vain! That he died as a *substitute* is evident from Rom v. 7, 8. "Scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet Christ died for us." Now if one should die "for a righteous man," and after all that righteous man be himself compelled to die, the death of the substitute would be thrown away. Just so, if after Christ has died for his sheep, they nevertheless are not saved, his death is vain! He "gave his life a *Ransom* for many." Matt. xx. 28. Now if the "ransom" was sufficient, shall not the captives be delivered? The very nature of the *atonement*, therefore, in my opinion, proves the infallible salvation of all for whom it was offered.

Obj. "But he died for all, for every one, for the whole world &c." Ans. Those expressions mean no more than all and every one of his people, in all ages and nations.

(It is not consistent with my plan, at this time, to enter deeply into this subject. Many objections are brought, but all, as I think, admit a satisfactory answer. But as this is probably the *most offensive* doctrine of what is called the "Calvinistic system," and is by many Presbyterians not thought essential to the general scheme, and as more fault will probably be found with this argument than with all the rest,—I will attach no importance to it at this time, and rely entirely on the other arguments.)

III. *Efficacious Grace*. The manner in which a man becomes a Christian makes it probable that when once converted, he will never cease to be a Christian. His conversion is not of *himself*; if it were, he might of *himself* go back again; but his conversion is an act of *Almighty Power* and *Sovereign Grace*. Eph. i. 18. 19. and ii. 4. 8. The doctrine of the Bible is that all mankind are by nature at *enmity* with God, Rom. viii. 6. 7. That in order to be Christians we must be *born again* John iii. 7. That those who are born, are born not of the will of *man* nor of the will of *the flesh*, but of *God*. John i. 13. That those who are willing to serve him become willing in consequence of his *power*, Ps. 110. 3. (and hence our opponents so often call on God to "come down with power.") That those who are called, are called not of *works*, but of *grace* given in Christ Jesus before the world began, 2 Tim. i. 9.

From all which we are taught that the cause of a sinner's coming to Christ is not in himself, but *wholly in God*. Now if God glorifies his power and grace in thus bringing a sinner to Himself; what good reason can be assigned for his ever casting him off? The sinner can never be *worse* than he was when he was called; and if God *loved* him then, why should he ever after *change* and hate him?

I will illustrate my argument by a single text. John vi. 44. "No man can come unto me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him, and I will raise him up at the last day."

Observe 1. This is an universal proposition, applying to *every man*,—"No man can come &c."—2. The cause of the sinner's coming to Christ is not in *himself*. He nei her *will* come, nor *can* come unless converted by *Divine influence*. 3. When he does come, his conversion is to be attributed not to himself, but to God alone—to the "drawing of the Father." 4. What shall become of him when he is thus *drawn* and has come to Christ? Shall he be suffered to go back? or shall he be saved? Our Lord answers the question, "I will raise him up at the *last day*." This is certainly a *promise* and not a *curse* and therefore the *resurrection* is used in a good sense for a resurrection to *life*. As the term "life," in the New Testament does not mean mere *existence*, but *happiness*; so the "resurrection" generally means the resurrection of the righteous. Therefore Paul was so anxious to "attain unto the *resurrection* of the dead." Phil. iii. 11.

Our Lord, therefore, promises in this text, that he *will grant eternal salvation* to those who are thus drawn to him by the Father. And as *all saints* are thus drawn, it is evident they *will persevere* till "the last day."

IV. The *Nature of the Covenant of Grace*, and the *Character of our Surety*. From the 5th Chapter of Romans, it is evident God hath made *two covenants* with *man*, the first with *Adam* for himself and all his posterity; the second with *Christ*, for himself and all his people.

The design of the *second covenant* was to remedy the *defects* of the *first*. Heb. viii. 6—13.

Our *Surety* in the *first covenant* was frail and fallible; our *Surety* in the *present, infallible*. Under the *first covenant* the *conditions were never performed*, and the *blessings were lost*. Had *Adam* fulfilled the conditions, he would have been confirmed and all his posterity with him in *happiness forever*. But our *second Surety has fulfilled the conditions* and secured the *blessings of the Covenant* for himself and all his people. He has been admitted into *heaven*, and there can be no doubt his people will all be admitted also. If the *Atonement* was *yet to be offered*, if the *Righteousness* by which they are to be *justified*, was *yet to be provided*; if the *conditions of the covenant were yet to be fulfilled*; if salvation depended on *their faithfulness*,—there would indeed be great uncertainty as to the *salvation of saints*. But since our *Surety* has performed all the conditions, the Father will not break his covenant with the Son, by refusing to save every individual of his people. Ps. 89. 34.

In short, the whole comes to this;—*your salvation, O Christian, depends on Christ's faithfulness, or on your faithfulness, or on both*. If it depends on *your faithfulness*, you are *lost*; if on *Christ's*, you are *safe*, for "he is faithful who hath promised." If he has promised to be faithful to you *only so long as you are faithful to Him*, then the whole depends on *your faithfulness at last!!!* And in this case, you are *worse off than before the Fall*; for then you had a *Surety in Adam* who was *perfect* and *not likely to fall*; but now you have *yourself* for a *surety*, and are *sure to come short and perish*.

But if *Christ be the Surety of saints*, they are certain to *persevere*.

Thus far my Brethren, I have argued with you from the General Principles of the Gospel, because as you admit them, they will have their force with *you* in proving the doctrines of *Perseverance*. But if I were arguing with an "Arminian," I would *write* all these Principles, which he would either wholly, or in part deny, and would argue with him from the following *plain passages of Scripture*. (☞ Please refer to the Bible for the texts in full.

V. Because *none become saints but those who have been previously given to Christ and such can never be lost*. John vi. 37, 39. "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out." This is the Father's will who hath sent me, that of *all* which he hath *given* me I should *lose nothing*, but should *raise it up at the last day*." Observe, the terms "*given*" to Christ—"Coming" to Christ—"in no wise cast out"—and "*lose nothing*"—all cover precisely the *same extent*. So that if one who was *given* to Christ should not *come to Christ*, or one who came should be *cast out* or *lost*, the whole would be falsified. (☞ See the text.

Suppose for instance the number given to Christ to be a *thousand millions*, (tho we hope ten thousand times that number will be saved,) then it is evident,

1. *Every individual* of these thousand millions given to Christ, *shall come to Christ*, or become Christians. Can you doubt? Suppose then, *one* of them should be overlooked and should not come to Christ, do you not perceive the declaration would be *false*—for “*all*” who were given to Christ would not have come to him! It is absolutely *certain* therefore, *all will come to Christ*. Suppose them come. Shall they *persevere*? Yes, for

2. Not one of these thousand millions can be *cast out* or *lost*, without breaking this *absolute promise* of Christ. Suppose only *one* individual after coming to Christ, should *on some wise* be cast out,—only one—would not this break the promise as effectually as tho a *million* were cast out! *This single text, therefore secures the infallible perseverance of every saint that ever lived, or ever will live on earth.*

Ah, but, says an objector, “*tho Christ will not cast him out, he may cast himself out*” Ans. would he not then be *lost*? But Christ says, “*I should lose nothing*”—and adds the positive promise, before explained, “*And I will raise him up at the last day.*”

New, my Brethren, if you would duly appreciate the weight of this argument, bring up all the *objections* I have named—“*Perseverance is inconsistent with free agency—tends to licentiousness—*inconsistent with *cautions, warnings, falls of Christians—apostacies &c.*”—bring them all to bear on this single text, and you will find them “*like snow balls pelting a wall of brass*,” or like noisy waves dash-ing and breaking on a Rock!

This text too will confirm all that I have said about election, redemption &c.

Obj. “*Coming to Christ is a condition of their salvation.*” Ans. Call it “*condition*” or what you please, it is *sure to take place*, for Christ has promised “*all that the Father giveth me shall come to me.*” Their coming, therefore, and their salvation are just as *certain* as tho there were no such “*condition*” in the case.

VI. Saints are Christ’s *SHEEP* and *shall never perish*. John x 11—29.

Note 1. Christ knows his people *before* their conversion and calls them his *sheep*. Speaking of the yet *unconverted* Gentiles, he says, (16.) “*Other sheep I have which are not of this fold, them also I must bring.*” (They were therefore *not yet brought*.) Just so, our Lord told Paul of the unconverted Corinthians, “*I have much people in this city.*” Acts xviii. 10.

2. The conversion of his people is *certain* and *infallible*. “*Them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice.*” Their calling therefore is absolutely fixed. Well, suppose they are called and become Christians, will they *persevere*,—or shall they be left to perish? Harken,

3. Christ *secures to them Eternal Life*. 28. 29. “*My sheep hear my voice and they follow me, (he takes that for granted) and I give unto them eternal life.*” Observe, He does not say “*will give, if you persevere &c*”—but “*I give*” now, immediately. And what does he give, mere *temporary* favour, so long as they are faithful?—No, he gives unto them “*eternal life.*” And lest some one should say tho you now favour them, they will by and by perish; he adds “*and they shall never perish.*” And lest some one should say, Satan or wicked men will pluck some of them out of your hand, he adds “*neither shall any pluck them out of my hand.*” And lest some caviller should still object, Thou art but a man, and cannot guard thy people, in all quarters of the world, he rises still higher, “*my Father, which gave them me is greater than all, and none is able to pluck them out of my Father’s hand!*”

And lest an obstinate believer in falling from grace, should still object “*Your Father may be of a different mind*,” our Lord declares “*I and my Father are One!!*”

Thus by *five* things as “*immutable*” as for Christ to lie, those who have heard Christ and followed him may be perfectly sure of *perseverance to the end, and of everlasting life.*” (Please refer to the Passage.

Obj. "Hearing Christ and following him are *conditions* of becoming his sheep." Ans. No, for they were his *sheep* before they heard and followed him. (16.) And, secondly, call them "conditions," or what you will, they do not make perseverance doubtful; because these will *certainly* take place, for Christ has promised they "shall hear" and be brought. Of course, whether you call them conditions or cobhouses, they do not oppose the doctrine of the *certain* perseverance of every saint.

Bring all the **OBJECTIONS** to bear against this also, and you will find the wall as solid here as before.

VII. The **PRAYER OF CHRIST** for all saints secures their salvation. John xvii. 9. 20, "I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me. Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me thro their word."

Obj. "Christ here alludes to his *apostles*." Granted; he does allude to them principally, and some things in the chapter may allude to them only; but the burden of the chapter manifestly refers to *all his people* in every age.

1. Because he speaks of "*power given him over all flesh* that he should give eternal life to as many as his Father had given him." (verse 2.) Now it seems to be narrowing this text too much to suppose he alludes *only* to the twelve apostles. But supposing him to have had in his eye *all his future people*, the sentiment is sublime and grand.

2. But whether he *here* alluded to all his saints or not, it is evident in the 20th verse, he had in view the *whole* of his future church. "Neither pray I for these (apostles) alone, but for **ALL** them which shall believe on me thro their word."

Now not only all the early converts believed on Christ *thru the word* of the apostles, but all Christians since have believed thru the same word *written*; and all future saints will be brought to Christ thru the same word of these apostles. Hence it follows, that in this Prayer, the Mediator actually interceded for *every individual believer*.

The only question, therefore, is, *will his Prayer be heard?* or will some one for whom he prayed be lost? He shall answer it himself. (xi. 41) "Father, I thank thee, that thou hast heard me. *And I knew that thou hearest me always*, but because of the people which stand by I said it &c."

Now, before this argument can be got over, one of these two things must be proved—either that Christ *did not pray for all his people*, or that his prayer was *rejected* by the Father!

VIII. The **CHAIN OF SALVATION**, Rom. viii. 30. "Whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified." Here Predestination, Calling, Justification and Glorification, are represented as so many links of an Almighty chain. If there be any meaning in the Apostle's argument, the *predestination* of a person *ensures his calling*; his calling *ensures his justification*; and his justification *ensures his glorification*. Do you doubt? Suppose the contrary, break the chain, and see what will be the consequence. God *predestinates* Peter and John; but in the event it appears Peter and John are *not called*! Does not this falsify the declaration of the text; "*whom he did predestinate, them he also called!*" Or suppose Peter and John are *called*, but God refuses or neglects to *justify* them! Would not this contradict the word of God, "*whom he called them he also justified!*" Again, suppose Peter and John are predestinated, called and justified, but after all they do not *persevere*, are never *glorified*! What a fall is here!—not of two immortal souls only,—but of what is far greater, the *Father or God*!

And yet we are told of Saul, Solomon, Judas &c. that they were *called* and *justified*—and yet not *glorified*! Which will you believe,—the Apostle or them?

We are told that the *cautions* and *warnings* of Scripture prove it *possible* to fall away; but here the Holy Spirit declares it *impossible*. Whose word shall stand, the Lord's, or theirs?

Here then, my Brethren, is a **STRONG TOWER**, into which the Calvinist runs and is safe. Men may *rail*, but no argument formed against it can prosper.

IX. Because NOTHING SHALL SEPARATE CHRISTIANS FROM THE LOVE OF GOD.
 Rom. viii. 35, 38. "What shall separate us from the love of Christ?" The Apostle challenges to name *any thing* which shall prevent final salvation. And then adds, 'For I am *pereuaded*, that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor *things present* nor *things to come* &c. shall ever separate us from the love of God which is in *Christ Jesus our Lord*.'

From which it is evident. 1. God loves his people with an *unchangeable love*.

2. One reason why Christians are never separated from his love, is that they are loved, not for their own sakes, (not chosen for their merits, nor rejected for their sins) but for the sake of *Christ Jesus their Lord*.

3. Therefore the Apostle had a *full assurance*, (for this is the meaning of the word *persuaded*,) not only for himself, but for every saint, that no *temptations* of the world, the flesh or the devil, should ever prevent their eternal salvation.

Obj. "He does not mention *Sin*."

Ans. 1. Neither does he *except* it, and those who say he does except it, should prove their assertion.

2. *Sin* was the *only thing* which he or his brethren were *afraid of*—the only reason for dreading persecution, famine, peril, death, devils &c. was lest these should lead them into *sin*. This was the *only way* in which these things could possibly separate saints from the Saviour. And therefore, when he expresses his firm persuasion that none of these things should separate them from the love of God, it is the same thing as saying, *these shall never influence us to sin*. God will give us grace equal to our day.

3. *Sin* is certainly included in the "*things present or things to come*." And therefore, my Brethren, it is refusing the comfort offered us in this text, to admit a *supposition* which would completely destroy not only our *triumph*, but our *hope*!

X. Because God hath made the decree of Salvation IMMUTABLE, for this *very purpose*, that his saints may have *STRONG CONSOLATION* and an *ANCHOR* to their souls. Heb. vi. 17, 18. "Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the *immutability* of his counsel, confirmed it by an *oath*, that by two immutable things (his word and his oath,) in which it was impossible for God to lie, *we might have strong consolation*, who have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before us;—which hope we have as an *anchor of the soul*, both sure and steadfast, &c."

Now 1. *Saints* are the persons who have "fled for refuge to the hope set before them."

2. To these God wishes to give *strong consolation*, an *anchor* to their souls, by which they may ride in safety however boisterous the storm, or terrible the temptation.

3. How does he accomplish this?—by giving them an *immutable promise* and confirming it by an *oath*, that nothing shall ever separate them from his love!

What could be stronger. It appears to me, that if a man be *conscious* of having fled to the hope set before him in the Gospel,—as many a Christian is, and *every Christian ought* to be;—for him, under such circumstances, to doubt his infallible salvation,—is to suspect God capable of *falsehood* and *perjury* !!

Obj. "He only promises to be faithful *in case we are faithful*." Ans. Not to say that *Christ our Surety secures our faithfulness*, so that we should be in no danger even on that supposition;—the Arminian idea that the faithfulness of God to us depends on our faithfulness to Him, would completely overset this cup of *consolation*, and render our strong *anchor* of no use. For a sinner, even after his conversion, is as unable to stand or to persevere, in his own strength, as a stone unsupported to remain balanced in the air. And Christ might just as well take us up into the air, and tell us, "If you remain here without falling, I give you my *word* and *oath* to save you,"—as to tell us "My faithfulness shall continue as long as yours!"

What *strong consolation* could there be if salvation were promised upon *such conditions*! If indeed we had an *anchor* to our souls, we should hold it only by a *cobweb-cable*!

XI. Because saints are **KEPT BY THE POWER OF GOD THRO FAITH UNTO SALVATION.** 1 Pet. i. 5. "Who are kept by the power of God, thro faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time."

Note 1. The saint's safety, "who are *kept*." The original word signifies to *guard*, or to *keep with a garrison*. Thus 2 Cor. xi. 31. "In Damascus, the governor *kept* the city of the Damascenes *with a garrison*, to apprehend me, and thro a window, in a basket was I let down by the wall and escaped his hands." Christians therefore are represented as in a garrison or castle guarded on every side, lest the enemy should come in to destroy, or the soul should escape and be destroyed. God guards his people on ev'ry side, and there is "not even a "window in the wall" thro which he will let them escape. They are thus "*kept*" as in a Garrison.

2. *Who* keeps the garrison? How strong is the *power* employed in keeping them? The text informs us—"Who are kept by the **POWER OF GOD**."

3. *How long* are they kept?—"Unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time." And all this "*thro faith*," or in a state of perseverance in grace.

Now unless the Garrison of the saints is too feeble to preserve them;—unless the Power of God is insufficient to keep them; and unless after they have attained "salvation at the last time," they can fall from heaven, I do not see how it is possible for any of the saints to fail of everlasting life.

XII. Because **GRACE ABIDETH IN BELIEVERS** and makes it impossible to sin fatally or unto death. 1 John iii. 9. "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him; and he cannot sin because he is born of God."

Observe 1 This is an *universal* proposition, applying to all Christians. "*Whoever* is born of God." What is said of one is said of all.

2 It is *impossible* for such to *commit sin*; "he *cannot sin*." Now, we must evidently except sins of *infirmity, deficiency* and *partial* captivities to the law of sin, or we contradict the whole Bible, and make the Apostle contradict what he said just before, "If any man say I have no sin, he deceiveth himself, &c" i. 8. The *sin* therefore of which the Apostle here speaks is of a different kind; either the *unpardonable sin* (as some suppose,) or a *wilful, deliberate, habitual course of sin*, which appears to me to be the meaning of the Holy Spirit. "*Committing sin*" (*poison amartian*) is here opposed to "*doing righteousness*" (*poison dia-kaiosune*;) and as "*doing righteousness*" is an habitual course of righteousness, so "*doing sin*" is an habitual course of sin.

Now the argument will be the same whether the *sin* here referred to be the *unpardonable sin*, or such a *course of sin* as implies the person has no grace. To one of these the text *must* refer. And it is expressly said this in the real saint *cannot commit*,—*of course cannot fall from Grace*.

3. We have the *reason* assigned why the Christian cannot fall: "for, or because his seed remaineth in him." So far from *sin driving grace* from the heart, as our opponents so frequently assert, it appears from this that *Grace* is the conqueror and *drives sin* from the heart, and thus makes the believer's fall impossible. His seed **REMAINTERS** in him.

Obj. "The argument proves too much, even that believers have *no sin of any kind*." Ans. No; it only proves they do not live in a *course of sin*, that they do not *follow sin* as a trade nor *work evil*. 3 John 11.

Obj. "The text simply means we *should not sin*." Ans. Where then is the force of the *reason* assigned for not committing sin,—"for his seed remaineth in him?" The Apostle evidently meant to assert the *impossibility* of a saint ever falling from grace, so as to be *entirely devoted to sin*.

XIII. Because saints are **SEALED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT UNTO THE DAY OF REDEMPTION** 2 Cor. i. 22, 23. "Now he which *establisheth* us with you in Christ and hath *anointed* us, is God: who hath also *sealed* us and given us the *earnest* of the Spirit in our hearts." An "*earnest*" is a part given as a *pledge* of hereafter bestowing the remainder. Eph. i. 13, 14. "In whom also after that ye believed, ye were **SEALED** with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the *earnest* of our *inheritance*" &c. Eph. iv. 30. "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God whereby ye are **SEALED** unto the day of redemption." We may "*grieve*" but cannot

banish the Holy Spirit. And when grieved he will soon chastise and bring us back.

2 Tim. ii. 19. "The foundation of God standeth *sure*, having this *seal*, the Lord knoweth them that are his." The object of a *seal* is to *distinguish* property; and thus the Lord distinguisheth or marketh "them that are his;"—it is also to *confirm* or *establish*; thus we set our seal to a bond, and kings set their seal to decrees; and thus God makes his foundation *sure*.—It is to preserve *in-violate*, thus we seal a letter, a cabinet.—and I may add, it denotes *secrecy* and *value*. In whatever sense you understand the word here, it denotes God's *special care* and *value* of his people.

It is set on them to *save them from destruction*. Rev. vii. 3. It was said to the destroying angels; "Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of God in their foreheads."

Now after saints have been thus *sealed*, shall they not be *known* of God?—shall they not be *established*?—shall they not *stand sure*, and be saved from *destruction*? After they have received this seal as an *earnest* of heaven, shall they be disappointed of the *remainder*? This would be to make the seal of God less security than the *seal* of his creatures.

And you will observe too that this seal is to secure the saints "*unto the day of redemption*," after which they will be in no danger.

XIV. Because *believing is a proof the believer has been ordained to eternal life*. Acts xiii. 48. "As many as were ordained to eternal life believed."

This teaches

1. That *some are ordained to eternal life*, of course to *perseverance* unto the end.
2. That their ordination or election to eternal life *preceded* their faith in Christ; and that therefore they were not ordained to life *on account of their faith*, but for some other reason,—even for the sake of Christ, in whom they were chosen.
3. That this *faith* was an *evidence* of their having been ordained to eternal life.

The argument needs no application.

XV. Because there is *joy in heaven over one sinner* that repented more than over *ninety-nine just persons* who need no repentance. Luke xv. 7. These "just persons who need no repentance" are acknowledged by our opponents to be *angels*. And tho I am not sure these are exclusively meant, I do not see why they are not intended.

Now there is undoubtedly great joy over every angel in heaven. The idea of a soul made perfectly blessed forever and ever is a most delightful thought; and the bare *possibility* of one of that blessed throng falling from heaven would (so to speak) fill the whole with grief! Now, if when a sinner repents, there be no *certainty* of his continuing in grace forever,—no, not for a year, nor a week, nor an hour, how is it possible that there can be joy in heaven over one converted sinner more than over ninety-nine angels! It is impossible. But upon supposition that the repentance of a sinner is the forerunner and *earnest* of his complete salvation; the beginning of that *glory* in the course of which he shall be exalted high above the angels, and abide throughout eternal ages,—there is a consistency and beauty in our Lord's declaration.

XVI. Because God says to every believer "*I WILL NEVER LEAVE THEE, NOR FORSAKE THEE*," Heb. xiii. 5. The strength of this promise in the original language, no translation can easily convey. There is a *double* and even *triple negative* used to show the impossibility of God's forsaking his people.

I am aware, however, some will say that this and all similar promises go on the supposition of *our never leaving nor forsaking God*. This mode of interpreting Scripture, my Brethren, is in my opinion, altogether unauthorized, and makes those promises perfectly nugatory which were intended to be breasts of consolation.

Upon this argument, however, as well as on the preceding I will not insist.

XVII. Because the Apostle *takes it for granted of all Apostates that they never*

were Christians. 1 John ii. 19. "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us; but they went out from us that it might be made manifest they were not all of us."

Note 1. Here were some apostates, or, as some would say, persons that "fell from grace." "They went out from us." But what does the Apostle say of them?

2. That they never were real Christians, "they were not of us." Observe, he does not say "are not," but "were not of us." They never were genuine saints, never had real grace.

3. *He takes it for granted that if they had been Christians, they would have remained so, and would have never fallen.* "For, if they had been of us, they would, no doubt, have continued with us." Observe, my Brethren, how *positively* he denies of apostates that they ever were Christians; and with what confidence he asserts that if they had been saints, they would never have fallen! He does not even *argue* on the subject, but, as if the matter would not admit of a *question*, as if there was *no possibility of its being otherwise*, he takes it for granted, "if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us."

So we say of Judas, Saul, Hymeneus and Apostates now adays, "if they had been saints they would have continued saints." If they had been "once in grace they would have been always in grace." And we think it unnecessary to *doubt* upon a subject on which the inspired Apostles speak with so much *confidence*. If men will still assert that our doctrines were first preached by *Satan*, that they came from *hell*, and will stake their soul's salvation that men may fall from grace, we can only wonder at them, and weep over them! We will not render railing for railing, but contrariwise blessing.

They may talk of their having been once Calvinists, and of their having tried our system and rejected it. We say of these as the Apostle said of errorists in his day, "They were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would *no doubt* have continued with us." They undoubtedly held (or they would not assert it) *what they thought* Calvinism; just as the persons mentioned by John held *what they thought* Christianity; but the Apostle decided that they were mistaken.

In all this I mean not to call in question the real piety of my brethren. Would I were half as holy as some who "abhor Calvinism!" But this I say, when they speak against Calvinism, "they know not what they do;" and peradventure they "will be found fighting against God!"

XVIII. It does not seem necessary to multiply arguments, or I would add, Christians are safe because *their life is not in their own keeping, but is hid with Christ in God.* Col. iii. 3, 4. "Ye are dead and *your life is hid with Christ in God.* When He who is your Life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory."

Note 1. Christians are *dead*—that is to the world, the flesh, and the devil; and yet they have *life*, i. e. spiritual and eternal life.

2. This life is not left to themselves to keep, lest it be lost; but the support, continuance and security of their life are in God. "Your life is hid with Christ in God." It is kept as a *secret treasure*,—hidden from Satan, from the world, and in some measure from the believer himself.

3. Christ is sure to keep it *unto the end*. "When He who is your Life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory." It is in view of salvation as a treasure kept by Christ, we hear such expressions as these, "Unto Him who is *able to keep you from falling*, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory." Jude 24. "I know in whom I have believed, and that *he is able to keep what I have committed unto him* until that day, 2 Tim. 1. 12. And on this account saints are said to be "*preserved in Jesus Christ*," Jude 1. And it is this consideration which gives such force to that promise "*Because I live, ye shall live also*," John xiv. 19. If Christ be not our keeper, if we are our own keepers, it is of comparatively little consequence whether Christ lives or dies! If Christ *cannot keep us* without destroying our *free agency*, if he has made *no promise* to

keep us; if our perseverance depends upon ourselves, I really cannot see why we are not quite as much indebted to *ourselves* as to *Christ* for salvation; and why we shall not be, full as much as He, entitled to the glory of that salvation!

XIX. Because *the God may suffer his children to fall in part, he will not suffer them to perish utterly*, Ps. 89. 30—34. “If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments; if they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments; then will I visit their transgressions with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes. Nevertheless my loving kindness will I not utterly take from Him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail.” These words, with the greater part of the Psalm from which they are taken, tho spoken originally of David himself, and his natural seed, have also a manifest reference to *Messiah* (the true David) and *his seed*. They show,

1. That Christians sometimes wander and fall into sin—“forsake his law and walk not in his judgments.”

2. These sins bring *suffering*. “I will visit their transgression with the *rod*, and their iniquity with *stripes*.”

3. Yet he will not utterly forsake. “Nevertheless my loving kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail.”

4. It is intimated that to take away mercy from *his people*, would be to take it from *Christ* whose people they are; and that such conduct on the part of God the Father would be *unfaithfulness* to his Son, and a breach of their mutual covenant.—“My loving kindness will I not utterly take from *Him*, nor suffer my *faithfulness* to fail; my *covenant* will I not break; once have I sworn unto David, his seed shall endure forever &c.”

For similar promises of *unchangeable* love, see Isa. xli. xlili. xlvi. liv., in short the greater part of that prophecy, from the xl. chapter to the end.

These general promises we see fulfilled in *particular* instances; as in *David*, who fell, but soon rose again higher than ever;—in *Solomon*, who tho he fell *far*, did not fall *utterly*;—in *Peter*, who tho he was suffered to be “sifted as wheat,” was not left in the power of his enemy. Just so of *all his people*, he may suffer them to be tempted, but “God is *faithful* who will not suffer them to be tempted above what they are able, and will, with the temptation, also provide a way of escape.” 1 Cor. x. 13.

If then God is *FAITHFUL*, saints are safe.

XX. *Apostates* are generally spoken of as those who *never had grace*. 1 John iii. 6. “Whosoever sinneth *hath not seen him*, neither known him.” Observe, it is not said, “*does not now see Him*,” but “*hath not seen him*;” i. e. never saw him. So 3 John 11. “He that doeth evil *hath not seen God*.” Show me a man then who now lives in a course of habitual sin, who has no grace, and I will show you one, that *never had grace*, whatever he might have professed.

Thus our Lord says of certain self deceivers, “I *never knew you*,” Matt. vii. 23., that is, I not only do not know and own you *now*, but I *never knew* and owned you as my true disciples.

Thus the *Stony Ground* hearers had “*no root in themselves*,” Matt. xiii. 21,—the Foolish Virgins had “*no oil in their vessels*,” Matt. xxv. 3. And of the ungodly professors in Jude it is said their “*fruit withered*,” that is, it died ere it was ripe; like the blades on the stony ground, which sprung up at once and bid fair for a while, but at length withered, without bringing a single seed to perfection. Thus they are said to be “*without fruit*” (12) and “*twice dead*,” because, like the blade above referred to, they soon withered and died.

Thus the apostates in Peter (ii. 20—22.) are compared to the *swine* whose nature was not changed.

Now all these are intimations to us, I think sufficiently clear, that those who fall away from their profession are to be considered as *having never had grace*.

Yet you will hear men appealing to *their own experience*, and ministers appealing to the *experience* of their hearers, that *they themselves* have fallen from grace, and even pointing to “*swine now wallowing*” in sin, as instances of those who were once of the number and *nature* of Christ’s *sheep*!

That those who teach such doctrines sincerely believe them, I have no more

